

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 FEA-02 DLOS-07 AEC-11 AID-20

CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-03 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FPC-01

H-03 INR-11 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07

RSC-01 SAM-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00

FRB-03 IO-14 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 /214 W

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P R 050530Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1164

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3624

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, SN, VS, CB, ENRG

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE/CAMBODIAN DISPUTE OVER OIL DRILLING  
IN GULF OF THAILAND

REF: A. SAIGON 11589; B. SAIGON 11476 (EXDIS, NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: STRAITS TIMES HAS PUBLISHED TWO REPORTS  
ON DISPUTE REPORTED REF A BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA  
OVER OIL DRILLING BY FRENCH CONSORTIUM, ELF, IN GULF  
OF THAILAND. LOCAL INTEREST HIGHLIGHTED BY PRESENCE  
OF SIX SINGAPOREANS ON OIL RIG WHICH ACCORDING TO PRESS  
GVN HAS THREATENED TO DESTROY IF RIG NOT WITHDRAWN BY  
SEPT 12. GOS HAS NOT APPROACHED EMBASSY OR  
ISSUED ANY STATEMENT BUT FRENCH EMBASSY IS ACTIVELY CON-  
SULTING WITH VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN EMBASSIES  
SINCE ELF OFFICE IS LOCATED IN SINGAPORE. FRENCH  
EMBASSY HAS ALSO INQUIRED AS TO U.S. INTEREST IN AFFAIR  
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AND ASKED IF WE COULD MAKE AVAILABLE ANY INFORMATION

CONCERNING THE SITUATION. AMERICAN OWNER OF RIG, GLOBAL MARINE, IS QUITE CONCERNED OVER SITUATION SINCE FOR REASONS SET FORTH PARA 4 BELOW IT DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WILL BE ABLE TO WITHDRAW RIG PRIOR TO EXPIRATION 15 DAY DEADLINE IMPOSED BY GVN. REQUEST EMBASSY SAIGON REPEAT REF B AND OTHER INFO TO THIS EMBASSY. RECOMMEND EMBASSY SAIGON SUGGEST TO GVN ONE WEEK EXTENSION OF DEADLINE TO ALLOW COMPANIES SUFFICIENT TIME TO WITHDRAW RIG.END SUMMARY.

2. SINGAPORE STRAITS TIMES CITING UPI REPORT FROM SAIGON REPORTED SEPTEMBER 4 THAT GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM LAST WEEK SENT A NOTE TO THE KHMER EMBASSY IN SAIGON DEMANDING THAT AN OIL RIG OWNED BY GLOBAL MARINE (THE GLOMAR 4) AND OPERATED BY THE FRENCH CONSORTIUM ELF 65 MILES SOUTHWEST OF THE CAMBODIAN PORT OF REAM, BE DISMANTLED AND WITHDRAWN BY MIDNIGHT SEPTEMBER 12. THE NOTE REPORTEDLY CARRIED THE ULTIMATUM THAT IF THE DEADLINE WERE NOT MET THE RIG WOULD BE DESTROYED BY THE VIETNAMESE NAVY. THE RIG IS OPERATING IN AN AREA DISPUTED BY SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. STORY HIGHLIGHTED PRESENCE OF SIX SINGAPOREAN EMPLOYEES ON RIG. ALTHOUGH STORY REPORTED THAT ELF REPRESENTATIVE SAID HE HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO WITHDRAW THE RIG FROM THE AREA, FRENCH EMBASSY HERE CONCERNED THAT ELF ACTUALLY TAKING A HARD NOSED ATTITUDE AND EITHER MAY NOT DO SO OR WILL DO SO ONLY AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

3. ON SEPT 5, STRAITS TIMES REPORTED GVN FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT OF SEPT 4 WARNED "THESE (OIL COMPANIES) WILL BEAR ALL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ANY MISFORTUNES IF THEY CONTINUE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF OFFSHORE RESOURCES WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM." STORY SAID CONSORTIUM WAS OWNED 65 PERCENT BY ELF AND 35 PERCENT BY EXXON, AND THAT 75 AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND INDONESIAN EMPLOYEES WERE OPERATING THE RIG. ARTICEL ALSO REPORTED WITHOUT CITING SOURCE THAT GVN HAD ORDERED A NAVAL TASK FORCE TO THE GENERAL AREA TO BACK UP ITS THREAT "TO FORCIBLY OCCUPY THE RIG" ON SEPT 13.

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4. ESSO SINGAPORE REP TOLD EMBOFF ESSO IS NOT OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE REPORT AND IS WAITING TO HEAR FROM AN ELF REPRESENTATIVE WHO TRAVELED TO SAIGON SEPT 4 TO DETERMINE THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION. GLOBAL MARINE, THE AMERICAN COMPANY WHICH OWNS THE RIG CURRENTLY ON LEASE TO ELF, IS QUITE CONCERNED WITH THE FATE OF ITS RIG AND THE SIX SINGAPOREANS AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN AND OTHER EMPLOYEES WORKING ON IT. THE

MANAGER OF THE GLOMAR 4 TOLD EMBOFF THAT GLOBAL IS PRESENTLY DISCUSSING WITH ELF PLANS TO MOVE THE RIG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT DUE TO FACTORS BEYOND GLOMAR CONTROL, THE RIGH COULD NOT BE MOVED BEFORE ABOUT SEPTEMBER 14. THE TUG BOAT TO BE USED IN MOVING THE RIG IS PRESENTLY IN DRY DOCK IN SINGAPORE AND CANNOT REACH THE SITE UNTIL SEPTEMBER 11. THEREAFTER, APPROXIMATELY 3 DAYS PREPARATION IS NECESSARY BEFORE THE RIGH CAN BE MOVED.

5. FRENCH EMBASSY COUNSELLOR BERTHOD CALLED ON DCM SEPTEMBER 4 TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER STRAITS TIMES REPORT, ASKED WHAT INFORMATION THE EMBASSY HAD AND WHAT INTEREST THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS IN THE SITUATION. DCM INDICATED HE WAS NOT YET COMPLETELY INFORMED CONCERNING THE EXTENT OF AMERICAN INTERESTS INVOLVED, BUT SAID U.S. WAS NATURALLY CONCERNED ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE THREAT TO AMERICAN LIVES AND PROPERTY. BERTHOD SAID HIS AMBASSADOR WAS CALLING ON THE VIETNAMESE CHARGE AND THE CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR THE SAME DAY TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. HE WAS WORRIED THAT ELF MIGHT BE TAKING TOO HARD NOSED AN ATTITUDE AND MIGHT NOT WITHDRAW BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF THE DEADLINE OR ONLY AT THE 11TH HOUR.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST EMBASSY SAIGON CONTINUE TO KEEP US INFORMED OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THIS EPISODE. ALSO REQUEST REF B BE REPEATED HERE IF PERTINENT. GIVEN POSSIBLE DELAY IN WITHDRAWING RIG EXPRESSED IN PARA 4, EMBASSY MAY WISH TO SUGGEST TO GVN A ONE WEEK EXTENSION OF DEADLINE.  
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## Message Attributes

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